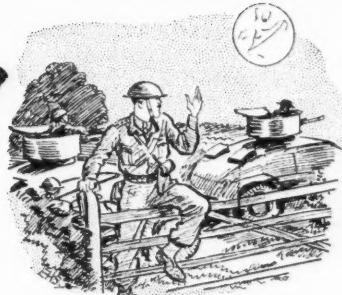


PUNCY

OR
THE LONDON CHARIVARI



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October 30 1940

Charivaria

"MANY social conventions are being changed as a result of this war," says a writer. It is no longer considered bad manners, for example, to ask one's prospective host if he keeps a good cellar.

A Rome broadcaster has said that Italy admires GOERING's *Luftwaffe*. Italy is now patiently waiting for a German tribute to the DUCE's Navy.

○ ○

Things That Might Have Been Expressed Differently

"London churches will learn with regret that their area representative, Mr. ——, has been evacuated to safer surroundings."

"The Two Worlds."

○ ○

"It was a doctor named Seus who in 1922 taught Herr HITLER how to breathe," says the *New York Daily Mirror*. There must have been a worse doctor than he was in 1890 or thereabouts.

○ ○

MUSSOLINI recently stated that he is the Protector of Islam. It will be remembered that he has made this threat before.

○ ○



A Kent man recently celebrated his hundredth birthday. He can remember when a Spitfire was a quick-tempered girl and a Blenheim was an apple.

Boys at public schools have started war savings associations. Many have written home for something to save.

○ ○

○ ○

A correspondent, writing to an evening paper, complains that a hawker sold him a couple of painted sparrows as canaries. All is not gold that twitters.

A German airman recently escaped from a British internment camp. It is not known why. He couldn't have been lonely.

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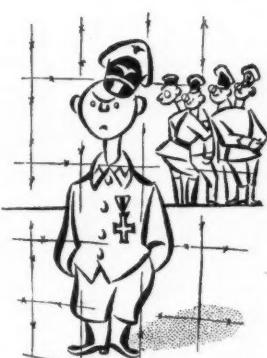
"Lady wants washing and cleaning, 3 to 12. Address at Herald Office."

N.Z. Paper.

The water's still on in Bouvierie Street.

○ ○

Nettles, we are told, taste like spinach when cooked. Another thing against them is that they sting before being cooked.



The EMPEROR OF JAPAN has awarded the First Class Grand Cordon of the Paulownia Sun to Count CIANO. The presentation of this decoration to Marshal GOERING has been postponed owing to pressure on space.

○ ○



○ ○

A sports-writer maintains that we should never allow climatic conditions to interfere with any kind of game. We wonder if he has ever had the tiresome experience of trying to pot the red during an earthquake?

○ ○

"RIBBENTROP dreams of future triumphs of tricky diplomacy," says a writer. We doubt, however, if he will ever persuade STALIN to sign the Anti-Comintern Pact.

Adventurers All

IT's no good," I said to myself; "I can't stand it any longer. I shall have to get away from it all."

As I paced up and down the library on that spring morning of 1922 it seemed to me that I had troubles enough on my shoulders. I was an undischarged bankrupt, under suspicion of having forged my own signature; and my wife had just before eloped with a well-known Yorkshire water-diviner. Worst of all, I had been informed that morning by an expert that my house, being built over an old tin-mine, was sinking into the ground at the rate of one foot a month—in twelve million years, he pointed out, it would reach the centre of the earth. I had always hated civilization. Now, I decided, was the time to quit it at once and for ever.

It was natural that in this frame of mind I should go and see my old friend Sir Henry Bopp-Sturgeon, the famous explorer. No man alive perhaps has had as much experience of getting away from civilization as he has. His journey across the Andes in a bath-chair, his search for the North Pole in the forests of Central Africa, his quest for the ruins of Carthage in the Great Australian Desert, are still spoken of in the London clubs, and his book, *A Wayfarer's Pilgrimage*, has been read by practically every publisher in Europe. My only fear was that he would have got away from civilization, this time, perhaps for good, before I could see him.

But there he was in his study, gigantic and blond-bearded, in rough Irish tweeds and stocking feet, just as I remembered him. With him were his two fellow-adventurers, that monocled soldier of fortune, Captain Tom Allbright, and that mackintoshed anthropologist, Professor Findhorn. At sight of me Sir Henry dropped the elephant gun he was carrying and held out an enormous hand. The other two held out slightly less enormous hands. The whole room seemed to be full of hands for a moment.

"Old man," I said, without wasting words, "I want to get away from it all."

"Then you've come to the right place," said Sir Henry with a laugh that set the doors slamming several houses away. "We only got back from Indo-China yesterday. That's the trouble, you know. One has to get back to it all before one can get away from it all again. I don't know how it

is. Anyhow, we're leaving England again next week. You can come with us."

"Where are you going this time?" I asked.

Sir Henry hesitated. "Fact is, old man," he said, "we're going to the M'baunda country in Central Africa. It's the Professor's idea. You see, the M'baunda tribe is said to be the most primitive now existing in the world."

That decided me. I gathered my few possessions together (Sir Henry had warned me that I should have to provide my own crockery), and on the appointed day caught the s.s. *Myopia* at Tilbury. All through the voyage out, while Captain Allbright dozed in the bullet-proof deck-chair which accompanied him everywhere, while the Professor leaned over the rail dropping plumb-lines, old tennis-rackets or anything else that came to hand into the pell-mell depths of the Indian Ocean, while Sir Henry paced up and down the companion-way arm in arm with the Chief Purser, I paced up and down the companion-way by myself, consumed with excitement. When we eventually dropped anchor at Zanzibar I could not wait for the gangways to be lowered. With one bound I had cleared the quay and was being sold a large quantity of wholly unwanted brassware in one of the native bazaars. It was some time before I discovered that our port of disembarkation was not really Zanzibar at all. I had to rejoin the rest of the party by a long overland route.

Yet my enthusiasm was undimmed, and when at last, after a tiring journey by railway, motor-car, camel, rickshaw, overhead tramway and foot, we reached M'ludwa in the heart of the M'baunda country, I could hardly restrain an exclamation of relief. The others heartily concurred. M'ludwa was indeed a beautiful place. Everything which the hand of nature could devise in the way of trees, earth and water was here present in profusion. Of the handiwork of man there was none. On a rising ground hard by a mango swamp, we pitched camp for the night.

We awoke to find several stunted though dusky figures standing about our camp, looking at us in a helpless way and occasionally pretending to put their hands into imaginary pockets. I soon found that Sir Henry had not been exaggerating when he called the M'baundas primitive. They had no houses at all, and for clothing wore only necklaces of antelopes' teeth and

pencil-sharpener, the latter relics of a former missionary enterprise. Their language consisted of about twenty words, nearly all meaning "Horse." There were no horses in that part of Africa. They could only count up to one, and in fact their headman, Umkanni, was regarded as a genius because he could count up to two, or even two and a half. They spent most of their time trying to produce a kind of primitive music by blowing into gourds, but without the slightest success.

Although Professor Findhorn, as an anthropologist, was highly delighted with these people, we others could not help feeling that they were really rather backward. Sir Henry had had a plan for growing coconuts and establishing a chocolate macaroon factory which could be connected (by an endless belt) with the docks at Dar es Salaam. In this way, he thought, we could flood the world with our products. The trouble was that it was quite impossible to get the M'baundas to understand how to grow coconuts. When they were shown a coconut they immediately tried to produce primitive music by blowing into it. The fact that the Professor was perpetually trying to persuade the tribe to become even more primitive in order to illustrate his theories did not help matters.

It seemed to me that the first step was to try to improve the social conditions of the tribe. If I could only induce them to live in houses, something would be gained. At great expense I managed to procure five hundred small hen-coops. But the M'baundas would not go near them; they would not even try to blow into them. Even Sir Henry, great-hearted fellow that he was, became cynical. When I proposed to buy them all wireless-sets, he protested openly.

"What's the good of giving them all wireless-sets?" he asked. "They'll only use them to keep their coals in."

"But they haven't got any coals," I objected.

"Then you'll have to buy them coals as well. More unnecessary expense."

His logic was irrefutable. Yet I was not satisfied. My next idea was to teach the tribe to play bridge. Every evening I had Umkanni the headman up at our camp, and the four of us—Sir Henry, Captain Allbright, Umkanni and myself—sat round the card-table for hours, while all around us sabre-toothed tigers prowled through the bush and the croaking of innumerable

fireflies came to our ears as in a glass darkly. When one considers what I have already said about the mathematical abilities of this tribe, our task might appear at first sight to be hopeless. And so in the end it proved. One very remarkable thing, however, was that in some mysterious fashion Umkanni contrived to win nearly all our money from us in the process.

We had to give up bridge in despair. Then one evening Umkanni suggested that we should play the national game of his own tribe instead. This was called *M'gagwa* or, as far as I can translate it, "Hitting people on the head with a lump of granite." Our curiosity was instantly aroused, the Professor's particularly. Umkanni produced a large block of granite, and without more ado the game began. I never found out exactly how it was played, for at that moment I received a heavy blow on the head and became unconscious.

So did my three fellow-adventurers. When we came to ourselves next day we could find no trace of the M'baunda tribe. Nor could we find any trace of our money, baggage, food, or possessions of any kind. The Professor explained that the tribe, acting on a sudden mass impulse, had become nomadic. But we had suddenly lost all interest in anthropology.

"Old man," said Sir Henry, with a bitter smile that almost caused his fly-away collar to burst open, "it's time we were getting back to it all."

He had expressed the sentiments of every one of us.

Boot 'e were that obstinate over 'is kink it were joost no use when woonce 'e started.

"Yon's nobbut hobstrooction," were all passon got for answer. And Bob begoon going to chapel regular, and still do.

Big chap is Bob. We're all tall in Scardale, ah know. Folk say it coom from trying to look over fell-tops to see what's t'other side.

'Appen Bob looks 'arder than most, and reckons 'em nobbut hobstrooctions to vision. There's no door to fit 'im in Scardale anyroad—which coom awkward for woon in ploombing trade.

'Appen it's trade as give Bob 'is kink about hobstrooctions. Hey, 'e were rare lad for rooning oop against gentry!

Colonel Stooart-Carroothers, 'im as took Thornby, were rare keen on 'ouse-boats. Whenever 'e got 'oliday in Hindia it seem 'e were accostomed to sailing across woonderful lake, rowed bi 'oondreds of black slaves.

Labour conditions being less heasy in Scardale, and river nobbut doozin yards across at Thornby, Colonel were compelled to content 'issel with motor-boat and woon lad for mechanic.

This were Tom 'Eblethwaite, 'oo niver say owt boot "Aye" and "Nay."

So when Bob Oldroyd coom to fish for sooper down Old Mill Quay, where boat were moored, conversation were woon-sided like.

"Coom by!" 'e shouted at Tom.

"Nay," said Tom.

"There's no place for yon boat 'ere," Bob towld 'im.

"Aye," said Tom.

"Ah tell thee, trout breed down yonder, and river moost be kept clear."

"Aye," said Tom.

"Yon boat's nobbut pollootion—and hobstrooction," said Bob.

"Nay," said Tom.

Then down coom Colonel, and there were rare oop-and-downer, Bob nattering over hobstrooction to trout, and Colonel swearing 'e'd sailed champion yacht *Boonderboot* oop River Jeeboomp or summat, and niver coom across sooch himpudence.

'Course nowt coom of it boot hoaths, and ah towld Bob 'e were doing 'issel no good in Scardale.

'Bout three nights later there were sighreen blawing, and Mrs. Garth's cottage, on side o' Thornby, 'ad windows broke bi hexplosion and couple of 'oles close to back end.

Bob were sent for on account of drain being boost.

'Course most o' Scardale took walk oop Thornby to see 'oles, and there were Bob shooving in new pipe when ah got there.

Woon big 'ole 'ad hexposed system, boot that were soon mended and filled in, and then Bob examined t'other.

"There's pipe-end knocked oop down 'ere," Joe Thorncliffe towld 'im.

"Nay," said Tom 'Eblethwaite.

"Doan't look like pipe to me," said Bob. "Not woon of ours, anyroad—it's kind of hobstrooction."

And 'e took spade and doog out long metal tube with soom sort of tackle on side.

"Hey!" roared Tom 'Eblethwaite soodden-like. "Yon's time-bomb! Chook it in river!"

Ah didn't see what 'appened next, for ah were diving like woon o' mi own dooks, and so were haff a doozen more. Boot it seems Bob doon like Tom said, and 'eaved bomb down bank, where it strook water bi Old Mill Quay and boost.

Hey! Ah were that shook oop ah dropped mi noo set on grass, and Bob didn't know Saturday night from Moonday morning for soom time.

Then 'e stood oop, and pulled long splinter—that were woonce rooder of Colonel's motor-boat—out of breeks.

Well, as ah say, ah saw Bob off oop road yesterday.

"Where's to boun'?" ah hassked 'im.

"Ah'm boun' to Depot," 'e answered. "Got to 'elp side moock-oop down yonder."

"Appen tha'll shift 'Itler afore tha cooms back?" ah towld 'im.

"Aye," 'e said. "It's long job, tha knows. Boot ah reckon yon chap's nobbut hobstrooction to 'uman system—which is reet work for ploomber, after all."



"I hear the Germans are going to try to invade us in flat bottomless boats!"

Bob Oldroyd's Kink

BOB OLDROYD's called oop. Ah saw 'im go yesterday. Ah were always fond o' Bob, for all 'e's that kinky 'e's like to land in trooble amoong harmy regulations.

First time ah thowt Bob were queer were over 'is difference with passon. Mr. Soogden were off-coomer to Scardale in them daays, and begoon bi burning hinnocence in church. Soom folk were in rare taking, and groombled about Pope and Rome and soochlike.

Boot Bob spoke straight out.

"It hobstroocts vision," 'e said to passon. "Ah can 'ardly see choir."

Mr. Soogden soospected it were Cissie Sootcliffe Bob were hankering to see, boot 'e doon 'is best to quiet 'im, and talked about oother kinds o' vision which Bob 'ad hought to be seeking.

All the News

IT would be difficult to say when or how the lines which follow first drifted into my head. I may have been startled by the sound of too many sirens, or have been reading too many daily papers, or listening too often to the announcements of the B.B.C. It was perhaps on a misty morning after a troubled and uneasy night that they printed themselves so clearly on my brain. Singularly bad verses they are, yet strangely reminiscent in places of some well-known poem learnt in childhood which I cannot now recall. The same, if you understand what I mean, yet not the same.

I

In motion on the ocean a British squadron lay
When a pinnace (like a censored word) was understood
to say
"Huge concentrations of the enemy are sailing up and
down the sea."
The Lord High Admiral, then, the bravest among men,
Decided on immediate quitting, since his ships required
refitting
And their crews or personnel were 49% unwell
And the hostile force outnumbered his considerably.

II

H.M.S. *Revenge*, however, through the personal endeavour
Of Sir Richard Grenville in command
(Who demurred to these debatings), stayed to pick up
several ratings
Drawn from a South-Western area and affected by malaria
From the land.

III

Thus impeded, he proceeded
To give battle, and conducted it so well
That it ranks among our sea-tales, though of course the
actual details
It would not be in the public interest to tell;
But a neutral Dutch observer (writing with uncommon
fervour)
Mentions that our sea-tradition scorned the Spanish
Inquisition,
And the foemen took a lamming while Sir Richard stood
there damning
The dirty Dons to h—ll.

IV

"All day long without abatement," says this unofficial
statement,
"Till his powder and his shot were running short,
He battered up like cardboard the six ships on his starboard
And the six ships on his port.
So mighty were his sinews," the narrative continues,
"So valiant was the strength of his enrageament,
That even the great *San Philip* subsided like a tulip
(For something seemed to nestle in the entrails of this vessel)
And it took no further part in the engagement."

V

However this may be, the British Admiralty
Regrets to make it known to all you listeners
That, Sir Richard having died through his wounds or
through his pride,

H.M.S. *Revenge* has passed, after fighting to the last,
Into enemy possession, and her crew are taken prisoners;
But has reason to believe that a storm which rose next
eve
And which sent this little warship to the bottom
Of an unknown portion of the Main
Has also damaged slightly, though they cannot tell this
rightly,
Some elements ('od rot 'em)
Of the shot-shattered navy of Spain.

* * * * *

A wild fantastic story; yet whatever one may feel about
the language of the foreign commentator, the last few words
(which have possibly slipped in by accident) strike me as
the only soul-inspiring part of the official communiqué
from Whitehall.

EVOE.

○ ○

Fables from the Ish

THE JESTER, THE PROVERBS AND THE JOKE

ALICENSED jester decided, in conversation with his
stooge, that they needed one more joke.
"Think of a proverb," said the jester.
The stooge pondered. "A rolling stone gath—" he
began after a time.

"Too old," the jester interrupted. "All the changes have
been rung on that one already."

The stooge pondered again and at length produced: "He
that runs may read."

"That's not a proverb," said the jester.

"It's a proverbial phrase," said the stooge. "That's all
we want."

"Nobody in our audiences knows it," said the jester with
finality.

"Very well," said the stooge. "People who live in glass
houses shouldn't thr—"

"Too long. A long one always sounds laboured."

"Bang went saxpence."

"H'm," said the jester. "Ang, bang, cang, dang, fang,
gang . . . H'm, gang went axpence, baxpence, caxpence,
daxpence, faxpence, gaxpence, haxpence . . . No good.
You can't get anything out of 'saxpence.'"

"I can't think of any proverbs," said the stooge.

"Oh, well," said the jester, exhausted, opening that
week's issue of *Comical Cracks* and extracting one with his
well-known flair.

How wrong to suspect jesters of not taking any trouble!

THE EMPEROR, THE CHAMBERLAIN AND THE COUNT

ASIMPLE-minded Emperor whose education, although
by no means neglected, had at length been given up in
despair, was listening to the account of a battle given by a
returned general.

"The number of the enemy that managed to escape our
victorious arms," narrated the general, concluding, "could
have been counted on the fingers of one hand."

A slight frown appeared on the Emperor's good-natured



THE JUGGLER



"I reckon this 'ere English Channel's worth a guinea a pint to us."

face and he murmured to his chamberlain "What does the man mean? Is there any other way of counting?"

Rightly regarding this as an impasse, the chamberlain fell down in a faint, in the depths of which he hid until, opening one eye, he observed the Emperor delightedly making the discovery that he could count on the fingers of both hands if he used the arm of his throne to rest them against.

The fact that the general was lying has no bearing on this story at all.

THE DUKE, THE MUSIC AND THE STORY

In an effort to arouse a certain Duke's interest in a musical composition that appeared to have left him cold, the leader of the orchestra said:

"This is said to have been inspired by the composer's passionate and unrequited love for the daughter of a poor woodcutter, who, having—"

"Was she beautiful?" interrupted the Duke.

"Very," replied the orchestra-leader.

"Oh, of course that makes all the difference," the Duke said. "Play it again."

Looking with concealed suspicion at the Duke, the orchestra-leader commanded his gang to play the music again. This time the Duke appeared to be mightily moved, and applauded loudly.

The orchestra-leader was still suspicious.

"Surely," he suggested, with the utmost respect, "that story cannot have made any difference to the way the music sounds?"

Assuming a terrifying glare, the Duke bent forward to ask "And what did you tell it for, then?"

THE AUTHOR, THE BOOK AND THE BUYER

An author wrote a very large fat thick heavy book, which for several months nobody bought. Eventually he received from his publishers a royalty statement informing him that one copy had been sold. This gave him an interest in life again and he spent two or three weeks tracking down the man who had spent the money. This man proved to have bought the book because not only was it quite handsome but also it would serve to hold his house down in a high wind.

THE PEEVISH-LOOKING MAN AND THE OPTIMIST

Rain had been falling for many days and nights when a peevish-looking man with his hair parted in the middle made to an optimist some derogatory remark about the weather.

The optimist replied brightly: "Well, I don't like too much sun, do you?"

The peevish-looking man felled the optimist to the ground; but the optimist made the best of that too. You can't get at 'em.

R. M.

Wind and Water

(Dedicated in emulous admiration to a distinguished military commentator.)

IT is essential to a proper appreciation of the military problem facing this country at the present stage of the struggle against the highly-organized forces of European and Asiatic tyranny to grasp the three main principles governing the issue of conflict between armed and mutually antagonistic societies. If we were to forgo a statement of these principles, imposed as they are severally by predetermined and infrangible climatic, geographical and cultural conditions, any assessment of the actual or probable resultant from the impact, or from the opposingly-exerted pressure, of the engaged forces, must seem arbitrary and unsustained; apart from which this article would be only about three inches long and would look silly.

1. The decision of a dispute between two civilized nations when resort to war has once been made can be recognized when—but not until—one disputant nation has achieved such advantage as to enable it to impose its will upon the other. This advantage may be reached by one or other of the combatants in any of three ways: by accident, by carelessness, by the attainment of military superiority—perhaps in a few rare cases by a combination of two or even of all three influences.

Examples of the first are to be found in the case of a warring nation whose whole territory *together with its armed force* should be engulfed in an earthquake or overwhelmed by a tidal wave; of the second, in the case of a state whose army should suffer its attention to be so diverted from its purpose as to cause it to forget all about the war and go home; of the third, throughout history, in the wars of Marlborough, in the French Revolutionary wars and in any other of those campaigns which the writer has had time to organize and put on a rational basis.

A later article will deal fully with the chances of a conclusion being reached in the present case by seismic convolution or by amnesia. For the present purpose it will suffice to confine consideration to the possibility of decision by military superiority.

2. The scope of operation of each of the three main divisions of a modern armed force—the naval, the military and the aeronautical—is restricted within sharply determinable limits to that element in or upon which it is peculiarly designed to serve. Thus, the commander of a purely military or land force encamped at Canterbury,

desiring to engage an enemy entrenched on the plains of Brabant or holding a line of positions in the closer Norman country to the South, would jeopardize the whole success of his operation by attempting to march his force beyond the line of the English coast without embarking them in boats and even engaging the help of such naval forces as might be at his command.

The maximum depth of water through which a land force may be marched under the most favourable conditions without impairing its fighting efficiency has been put at 1·4 metres, or rather less than fifty-eight English inches, and this depth is far exceeded in the waters between the French and British coasts. To the intuitive military genius of Napoleon this principle presented itself as paramount, and it is here rather than in any hesitation to measure the strength of the forces ranged on this side of the Channel that we must find the explanation of his failure to march the Grand Armée directly across the narrow seas to the invasion of this country.

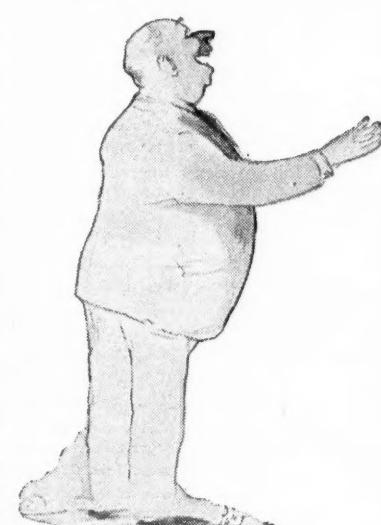
3. Decision by military superiority is reached when—and not until—the armed forces of one belligerent have so far reduced or exhausted those of the other as to render them incapable of further resistance. Thus, a military commander, holding with 10,000 men that gap between the sources of the

Avon and the Welland which is the key to military supremacy in this island south of the Cheviots, who should be opposed by armies overwhelmingly superior in numbers and equipment converging upon his positions from London, Nottingham, Stamford and Gloucester, and who should find himself so far unable to resist their combined onslaught, owing to the reduction of his numbers by casualties, the damage inflicted upon his artillery, and the restriction by enemy occupation of the territory upon which he can depend for supplies, as to be obliged to abandon resistance altogether, would have suffered defeat by military superiority.

It would have been just the same had it happened when he was holding those crossings of the Upper Thames between Oxford and Twickenham the possession of which gives to an army initiative and freedom of action over the whole country east of a line from the Pennines, through Gloucester, to Lyme Regis. No commander can afford to ignore the effect of defeat under such conditions.

If we now consider in relation to these three principles the campaign, or more properly the series of campaigns, upon which we are at present engaged, we can take some measure of the difficulties which face not only ourselves and the United States of America, but also our opponents. The importance of the Navy on the sea, of the Army on the land, and of the Air Force in the clouds above becomes immediately apparent.

It is not within the scope of this survey, nor could it serve any other purpose than to forearm and prepare the enemy to whose destruction we are committed, to examine too narrowly the application of these principles to the complex military problem now facing us, but the implications must be clear to every student of history and must be present in the minds of those who direct our strategy. Within the limits set by these principles the struggle must develop, and within these limits the decision must be reached upon which will depend the history of Europe for the next three centuries.



"My dear fellow, we had a land mine slap through our roof."

(*Note to Printer.*—If it should be necessary to cut for space, delete every alternate sentence, not every alternate paragraph as in the case of book reviews. The two branches of writing are not comparable.) A. M. C.



*"I hardly like bothering you these days with a fire
that started NATURALLY."*

Donald of the Films

BEFORE the gangster war began,
When stars of purest ray serene
Warmed the appreciative fan
With glamorous charms upon the screen,
When she would move the stern and strong
And he the female breast allure
Till some new planet came along
And for the moment wrought a cure,
The public taste might wander free
From change to change without a pang,
But Donald was the star for me
And Donald was the star I sang.

To me in a sequestered spot
Those golden stars are far away,
The minor cinemas do not
Import them, for it wouldn't pay;
Now, too, a nobler vision glows
Deep in our hearts, nor are we lost
Without them, as they might suppose,
Apart from their alarming cost;
Yet still, at moments such as this,
I'm like the milkmaid all forlorn,
For Donald is the star I miss
And Donald is the star I mourn.

But when the gangsters' day is past,
When all the fans return anew,
Feeling the fresher for their fast,
To greet their stars in one long queue,

When those impassioned moods recur
And stars wax bright, or stars grow dim,
When manly waistcoats throb for her
And female bosoms thrill to him,
First in the fray my form shall be,
Reckless and glad the coins I fling
When Donald is the star for me
And Donald is the star I sing.

DUM-DUM.

Long Black-Out Evenings

THIS has nothing to do with air-raids; it's about those evenings in the country when you sit round the drawing-room after dinner and if the telephone rings, which it almost never does, people go on sitting and wondering who it can be for till, in exasperation, three of them rush to answer it. Long black-out evenings are a great problem for such people. It is a little-known and fairly interesting fact that, while it is perfectly easy to spend an evening alone, it is very difficult to spend it with a lot of people. One person can sit for hours alternately knitting and unravelling a pullover, and the time will go in a flash. But when there are twelve people in the room, nine of them knitting and unravelling pullovers and the other three there to wind wool on, there will be a kind of guilty feeling in the air. The problem of how to spend a long black-out evening is jabbing at everyone's conscience. Sooner or later someone will crack up and suggest a nice game.

The reflex action to anyone suggesting a nice game is a low muttering which can be analysed into eight of the people saying there are no pencils and the other four saying Animal, Vegetable or Mineral. This, you see, is about the only game of its kind that you can play without someone having to go out of the room.

Animal, Vegetable or Mineral is played like this. One of the people—A, to make it clearer—thinks of something. I know everyone is always thinking of *something*, but this is something definite. B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, K, L and M all try to guess what it is. A can only say "yes" or "no", but if he says "ye-es" or "no-o" it might mean "not exactly".

B finds out that whatever it is is not exactly a mineral. (A, by the way, has to be the sort of person who doesn't know that wood is a vegetable but thinks that leather is.) C finds out that it is not exactly in the room. D—someone's aunt—finds out that it is not soda-water. E finds out that it is nothing to do with Churchill. F finds out that it is not in England. G, who wasn't listening, finds out that it is nothing to do with Churchill. H finds out that it is in England. It goes on like this till someone says, "Well, what is it?" A says it is Herbert Morrison, and if people didn't all talk at once they wouldn't get muddled.

The rule is that if anyone had guessed it, that person would be the one to think of something for the next round. But there isn't often a next round.

The next thing that happens will probably be a card trick. You need two and a half packs, or three if anyone notices in time that the other half-pack has gone down behind the drawer. C—one of the three people who have been having wool wound on them—spreads one of the packs out on the floor, face upwards, and asks E to choose a card without saying which. E chooses. C picks the cards up and shuffles them. D finds the two of clubs under the sofa and gives it to C, who puts it back. Now C deals the cards, one on top of another and face upwards again, on the



"Mind the abyss, please . . ."

floor, while E goes on knitting. C tells E to watch. E goes on knitting. C turns up the five of diamonds and says "There you are." E says it wasn't, it was the eight of hearts. C turns up the next card, which is the eight of hearts. No one knows how this trick works, because no one ever bothers to ask C.

The next card trick is more complicated. C deals out the cards of two packs in little stacks of three, face downwards, all over the carpet. B's dog walks across them. C deals them out again and asks A to memorize the cards in any one of the stacks A likes, and to put it back face downwards. A does this. C makes the stacks into one pack without shuffling, which everyone thinks is pretty fishy. Now C asks D to cut them once. D cuts them once. Now C turns them up one by one, putting three cards aside in the process. C tells A that these are the three cards A has chosen. A, who has been trying ever since to remember which they were, looks relieved and says Oh, are they?

No one asks C how this trick works either. Oh, and no one except C knows what the third pack, or half-pack, was going to be for.

Now we come to tricks with matches. E offers to do an awfully good one, and A, H and K all say they know an awfully good one too. There is only one half-full box of matches, which they tip on the floor and share out. E arranges eight matches in a square and asks if anyone can make them into two squares by only moving one match. A arranges eight matches in two squares and asks if anyone can make them into one square by only moving one match. H puts six matches in a row, the three at one end facing one way and the three at the other facing the other, and says these six matches are three black sheep and three white sheep. K asks if anyone has any more matches. H says that a black sheep can jump over a white sheep and a white sheep can jump over a black sheep. K says well, if anyone has any used matches, they'll do. H says that the sheep can't jump backwards, only forwards, and they can jump

forwards any number of times as long as the black sheep end up where the white sheep are now and the white sheep end up where the black sheep are now. K goes and sits down. B, C, D, J and M get up and look at all these different arrangements of matches. Then they go and sit down too. F, G and L were sitting down all along. The interesting thing about match tricks is that no one sees the matches again.

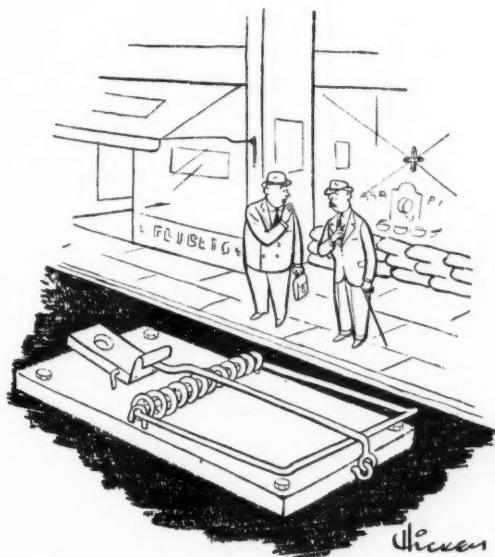
Sometimes match tricks lead people to think they can remember tricks they learnt at school with pieces of string. There are two kinds of string trick—one the sort you could do if you had a short piece of string and the other the sort you could do if you had a long piece. But when a black-out evening gets down to string tricks someone usually goes into the kitchen to make the tea. And, by the way, the interesting thing about *this* is how much washing-up it makes for next morning.

. . . Autres Mœurs

WE speak of Mrs. Jones the Fish no more,
We have no longer Evan Rhys the Bread;
Old Huw still wears the uniform he wore,
But Huw the Post is Someone Else instead.
Good-bye to you, young Dai who was the Fruit,
And have you left us, Williams the Bank?
Marged the Fish and has she followed suit?
And I, am I at last awarded rank?

Come, wander down the cobbled hill with me
And say Hello to Huw the A.F.S.,
And buy a loaf from Rhys the F.A.P. . . .
Good morning, Dai the Warden—lovely, yes!
Marged the Knitting! Wool arrived at last?
(That's Williams the Home Guard, I believe.)

I do all this to hear them when I've passed
Hiss: "Young Miss Smith the A.T.S., on leave!"



"I think it may be some sort of new-fangled tank-trap."

At the Opera

"FIGARO" (PLAYHOUSE, BUXTON)

SADLER'S WELLS being now a restaurant for the homeless of Finsbury, its artists must sing elsewhere for their supper. Touring opera is no light matter in these times, but Mr. GUTHRIE has made it as light as may be, and a little help from that good angel of music and drama in war-time, C.E.M.A., has enabled the stars of Clerkenwell to shine among heights more wuthering and carry Mozart and Verdi to the Pennine Chain. A week at Buxton let the Company in gently to a tour of northern industrial towns. There is no doubt that, with a little peace over their heads, they will pack every house they enter. For the North knows a bargain and here is one, combining the Covent Garden standard with the Hippo, Coketown, prices.

Figaro is excellent for Buxton. Let a full moon play on the spa's superbly curving Crescent and on the lonely thrust of eighteenth-century style which Buxton drives into the Gothic scenery of the Peak, and a cavalcade of well-graced mummery is a natural vision. The Crescent by night is Mozart in stone. Mozart rightly mimed, as well as capitally sung, is the proper echo of such architectural elegance.

Londoners who care about these things well know the vocal quality, as well as the porcelain grace, of Miss RUTH NAYLOR, for whose mischief the less-mannered but no less musically-rich performance of Miss JOAN CROSS, as the *Countess*, is an admirable partner. Mr. JOHN HARGREAVES, as *Figaro*, is a player as well as a singer of accomplishment, and responds well to the lively direction of Mr. TYRONE GUTHRIE, who has reshaped and quickened the operas for this tour: they must of necessity be pocket-size productions, while the orchestra, under Mr. COLLINGWOOD, makes up with skill what it lacks in bulk.

The present dispersion of drama and the arts, for which the troubles of London are responsible, will bring great benefits to other places and possibly some benefit to the players too: along with the discomforts of travel in our time and the dilemmas of the roofless in a strange town, the Sadler's Wells team will have the consolation of an immensely cordial welcome, such as the "Old Vic" players have just enjoyed before them. The hills about them may be grey, but the hearts beating to their music will be far otherwise.

I. B.

At the Show

"PLAYS AND MUSIC" (GRAND, BLACKPOOL)

A CITY offering comparatively quiet nights, a noble line of potted shrimps, oysters for all purses, the Tower Ball-Room, and the simultaneous presence of Miss BEATRICE LILLIE, Mr. VIC OLIVER, Mr. BUD FLANAGAN (unparted of course from Mr. CHESNEY ALLEN), Mr. LUPINO LANE and Mr. GEORGE FORMBY, with all the lesser starry rout proper to such planets' company, is plainly a Xanadu for sore times, a pleasure-drome where tedium is impermissible and laughter still abides. True, some of Blackpool's City fathers recently had the strange idea of becoming motherly apron-stringers and of packing everybody off to bed (as though the South Shore were the Fifth Form at St. Dominic's) by a ban on all traffic after nine o'clock, lest Germany look on. But obviously Xanadu and curfew are incompatible. Freedom shrieked and not in vain. The pleasure-drome was permitted its liberty of trams and buses till after ten. Not, you might think, an orgy of licence. But in these days we must be thankful as any schoolboy for a small exeat and a silent sky.

To have entertained Miss LILLIE (for the first time) and then to have made it difficult to see her would have stultified Blackpool in the eyes of all sensible people. It did not happen. So Blackpool came, saw, and was conquered. How otherwise when Miss LILLIE was tearing a torch song to delicious pieces, demonstrating the realities of rhythm, singing of that Nanette whom nobody could remember, and coyly introducing us to the fairies at the bottom of the garden? "This will kill you," says Miss LILLIE, with candour beyond praise, when she comes to the point of her ditty. Overwhelmed we certainly are with laughing, "killed"—or enlivened quite a deal.

Miss LILLIE can turn to emotion and "wibrate the strings," as Mr. Tappertit would have said, as surely as she flicks immensities of mischief from the littlest of fingers. She is the genius of a gem-like caprice, while Mr. OLIVER is the superb master of a broader nonsense. Nobody could be so bad a musician as he becomes without being the excellent musician whom he usually conceals. He is as fertile of good patter as of good fiddling, varies his quips nightly, and delivers them with an affability beyond resistance. The styles of these two do not

naturally blend; but when they are fooling together, as in Mr. COWARD'S *Red Peppers*, they are the more amusing the more heartily do they clown.

In the other two COWARD sketches they reign in separation. Miss LILLIE is grandly the overbearing chatterbox, all mannerism and no manners, in "Hands Across the Sea," while Mr. OLIVER, getting into moustaches, mackintosh and Mean Street, becomes the rebellious husband of "Fumed Oak." The first piece is very much her cocktail, the second not quite his cup of tea. But he has conquered Blackpool before and Blackpool will always ask for more OLIVER. Now it will require a second blooming of Miss LILLIE. Also, if it has any sense, it will require the same supporting company, among whom Miss JOYCE CAREY, Miss JOAN SWINSTEAD, Mr. HUGH FRENCH and Mr. ALAN WEBB do extremely clever things in various disguises, while Miss MOYA NUGENT is unforgettably awful as the adenoidal schoolgirl who hears the truth about her home life to the music of her own odious sniffs and sobs. Should this team pass your way during its autumn tour, your presence would be prudent.

I. B.

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THERE are numerous detachments of troops from all corners of the Empire—many of them in isolated stations—who would be grateful for some distraction to enliven their periods of leisure.

Mr. Punch would like to point out to his readers an easy way of helping to entertain them. Gifts of books, playing-cards, dart-boards, gramophones, wireless instruments, etc., sent to Major MAURICE RAWLENCE, Riversfield, Bemerton, Salisbury, Wilts, O.I.C. Welfare for the Southern Area, will be appreciated and personally acknowledged if the senders enclose their names and addresses.

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"Person, sleep nights, do some work in the mornings; Murrayfield."

Situations Column in Scottish Paper.

Doze afternoons?

• •

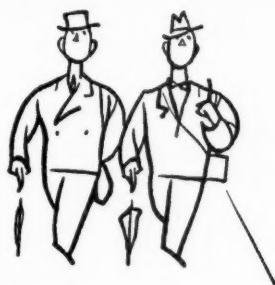
LITTLE lumps of rubble,

Little bits of glass

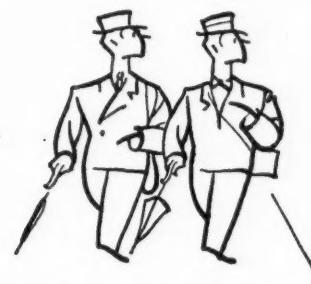
Mark the approximate site of my conservatory before it experienced a spot of trouble.

Goering is an ass.

Just

Tongman

"Hark, there's an air-raid warning...."



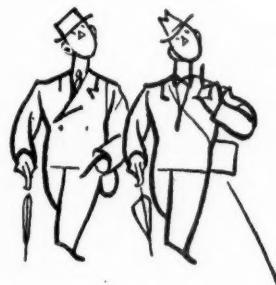
No, it isn't—it's a car."



"THERE'S one, anyway...."



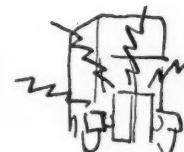
No—it's a lorry!"



"Well, THAT'S it this time...."



No—it's a bus!!"



"You know, they really ought to be prohibited.
Just listen to that one...."



!!!"





CONVERSATION PIECE

Lady into Balloon

THE war grows serious. One can't get eggs:
And nimble Beauty too will soon have fled.
For silk is to be stripped from Laura's legs
And draped about those large balloons instead.

No more may Man uplift his horrid heart,
Or give his sense of form a private treat,
With shiny shins that dazzle and depart,
Or coloured calves that twinkle down the street.

But he must fix his fond artistic eye
(If he insists on pleasure still, the hound!)
On those bright shapes that sail about the sky
Like captive elephants the wrong way round.

This is but one more sacrifice to face;
And here and there the ban may be a boon.

Dear Laura's legs (to take a single case)
Were always rather like a large balloon.

And many a sentinel, remote and cold,
Who longs to see his home again, but can't,
Will look aloft and, comforted, behold
The lower limbs of some beloved aunt.

While others, poised on matrimony's brink,
Will seek a sign from heaven and be bold,
Will see the plump but pleasing shapes and think
"Thus will my Mary be when she is old."

As for my Ann, she must not knit that brow,
Though she will walk in cotton things that chafe;
She won't be much less dangerous than now,
But England, I suppose, will be more safe.

A. P. H.



ENEMY, FRIEND, OR NEUTRAL?



Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND

THIS Fund, which was originally started in order to purchase supplies of raw material and distribute them to Voluntary Working Parties for the Hospitals, has already sent out nearly 30,000 lb. of Knitting Wool, 20,000 yards of Unbleached Calico, and the same amount of Veltex, as well as many other materials of all varieties, to be made up into comforts for the wounded.

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Debate on Agriculture.

House of Commons: Discussion on
Agriculture.



THE FAIRY GODMOTHER

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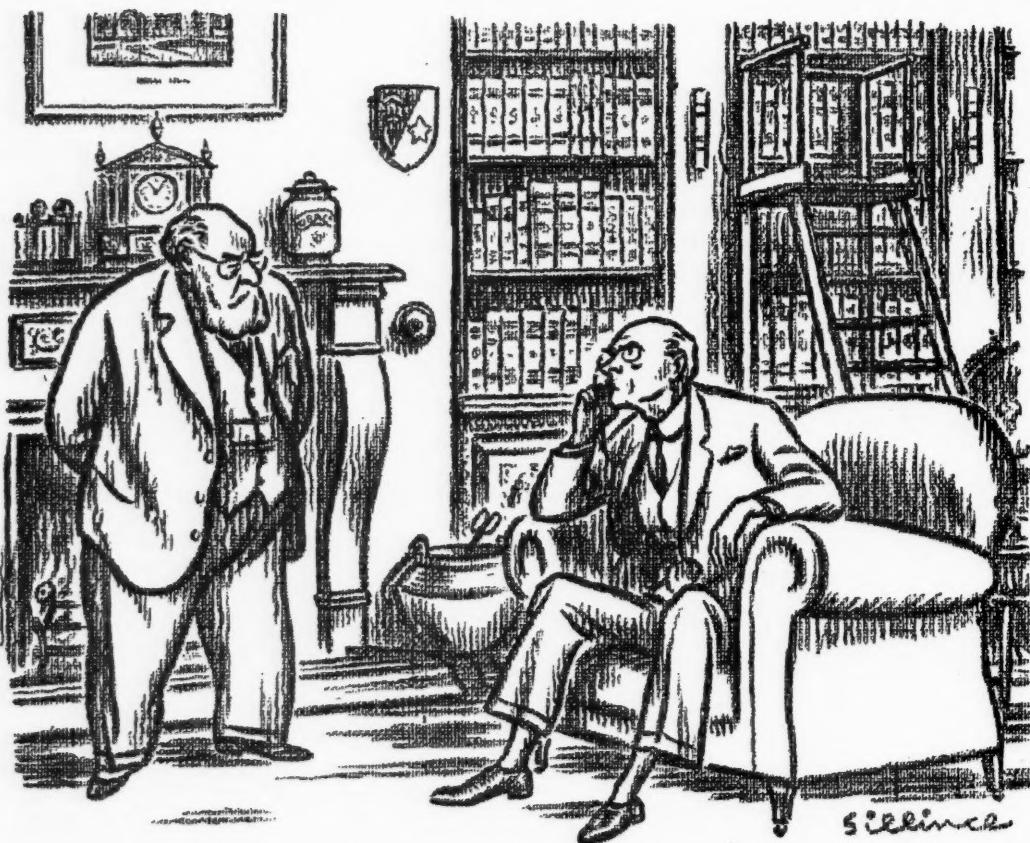
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Silinice

"The Nazis may call the bombing 'reprisals' if they like, Murchison, but in plain English it's nothing less than the strategy of Schrecklichkeit."

mentioned that the simple folk of the Near East had recently been told that Herr ADOLF HITLER, in one of his "flights over London," had seen both the KING and Mr. CHURCHILL in full panic-stricken flight.

This of course was only a flight of fancy, but the point was that there might be people in the world who could be persuaded to believe it. So special steps were being taken to counteract these stories.

And so to turnips.

Wednesday, October 23rd — Mr. MANDER wanted the Diplomatic Service thrown open to all classes of the community, and competent Mr. "RAB" BUTLER, Under Secretary to the Foreign Office, replied quite simply that it already is. There was a barrage of questions about the plan to send Dutch East Indies oil to Japan,

and all of these were stonewalled by the same astute Minister.

Col. JOSIAH WEDGWOOD provided the day's storm—or, as it was to turn out, the first of them—by whipping up the most terrific tornado over Prince von STARHEMBERG, who is serving as an airman with the Free French Forces.

With his lips drawn tight, and his massive brows knitted into a stern straight line, he leapt up and was heard to utter a series of words in which "assassinated Democracy in Austria . . . scoundrel . . . this fellow" were caught above the general chant of "Order, order."

It is certainly out of order to stand while Mr. SPEAKER is standing, but Col. WEDGWOOD was far too angry to bother about such technicalities. It turned out that he objected to the

Prince being in the Allied Forces, but Mr. BALFOUR of the Air Ministry replied that anyone who liked to risk his life for our cause was welcomed to the Forces.

Muttering, Mr. WEDGWOOD gave in.

Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, Home Secretary, one of whose duties is to deal with reprieves, moved a Bill to reprise Parliament until November 1941. Normally, what life there is in the present House of Commons would leave it within the next four weeks. The Bill allows a resurrection for twelve months.

The House performed the Faust-like task in a few moments, and Lord WINTERTON brought another fresh draught of bitterness into the proceedings with an attack on Mr. H. G. WELLS, who went to the United States and "said things" about Lord GORT,

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England, and whatnot. Lord WINTERTON wanted something done about it. Fairly snorting with fury, he said Mr. WELLS's words were "indecent, nay, blackguardly." Our own A. P. H., said he, was far more representative of the literature of the country than was Mr. WELLS. And a lot more like that.

Mr. EMANUEL SHINWELL, his neighbour on the Opposition Front Bench, in turn rent Lord WINTERTON. Then various honourable Members rent each other or Mr. WELLS.

Finally, Mr. OSBERT PEAKE of the Home Office poured oil on the troubled waters—only to find that the waters were really flames and that the oil did not exactly soothe matters.

However, the bell went and stopped the fight. From his ringside seat your scribe was unable to say with certainty whether it was a draw or a win on points. Lord WINTERTON, at any rate, seemed to consider that he had won what used to be called a "moral victory."

Thursday, October 24th.—"East, West, Home's best" is apparently the motto that Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, Home Secretary, wants us to adopt in air raids. He said he hoped there would be no abandonment of perfectly good domestic shelters in favour of public shelters which might already be overcrowded.

Mr. MORRISON also announced amid cheers the paradoxical decision that "Summer time" is to continue throughout the winter. As SHAKESPEARE almost said: "Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by this son of London."

The scope of Lord REITH's new Ministry of Works and Buildings was explained. He is evidently to be a kind of Fairy Godfather, producing gay little gardens where only slums grew before.

Then, having first repaired to the Upper House, where a few Bills were promoted to the status of Acts, the faithful Commons faithfully passed into the black-out of a secret session to discuss—appropriately—air defence.

○ ○

"Couple Seek Perfect Cottage, Safest Area; mains, central heat; sunny, lovely surroundings; close town, station, buses. Rent unfurnished, duration. Might purchase. Bargain figure."—*The Times*.

May we suggest Stepney?

○ ○

"Soldiers when on duty or active service will wear *only* spectacles provided at the Public Expense."—*Army Order*.
Not even woad?

There is no Sanctuary for Brave Men.

THREE is no sanctuary for brave men,
Danger allures them as it were
a sun;
What they have dared they will dare
once again
And so continue till the day is
done.

There is no satiation of brave deeds,
One draws another as wit calls on
wit.
Oh, what a soul it is that ever
heeds
The hour's necessity and springs to
it!

There's no intimidation of great
thought,
Knowledge attracts it as the
heavens the eye;
Though dangerous 'tis to learn, it will
be taught,
Pushing its question to the utter-
most Why.

There is no sanctuary for brave men,
Danger allures them as the moon
the tide;
What they have dared they will dare
once again
Though they lose all else in the
world beside.



Home Guard Goings-on

Autumn Manoeuvres—I

IT will be remembered (as the announcers say, probably from a similar conviction that it will not) that our Section Leader had some anxious moments over our forthcoming Tactical Exercise, and that this anxiety was due to the startling proposals of our Platoon Commander, an ex-naval officer of violent unorthodoxy in military matters. However (it will be remembered), circumstances caused this spirited reactionary to abandon his dreams of attacking the enemy (kindly impersonated for the occasion by an officer of high military rank) with garden-hoses, smoke-screens, decayed fruit, bags of soot and boxes of earth, in favour of tactics less likely to culminate in the platoon's mass court-martial.

This change of plan, while smoothing the wrinkles from our Section Leader's brow, was a disappointment to the rank-and-file. To be dazzled one moment with the promise of powerful weapons of destruction, and to be told the next that we were to tackle the invader with our bare hands, seemed, to say the least, inconsiderate; and it must be confessed that we were inclined to be sulky about it. The Tactical Exercise, it was murmured on all sides, was going to be a flop. We had been told that we were to be a bombing section. How, we demanded of each other, were we to be a successful bombing section without bombs?

Numbering amongst his other admirable qualities a keen understanding of human nature, our Section Leader accordingly evolved a compromise. On our next duty-night we were issued, to our delight, with a hundred stout paper bags and a sackful of sawdust. The bags were stout enough and the sawdust clean enough to ensure no more than superficial damage being done to the high officer's motor-car or person in the happy event of our scoring a direct hit on either, and we set to work gaily to transform these raw materials into Mills Bombs (white bags) and Molotoff Bombs (green bags). We sang, believe it or not, at our work, a circumstance which brought the siren-sounder from the British Legion hut next door to investigate a suspected infringement of copyright.

There can be little doubt that we of "B" Section are more conscientious than the rest of the platoon. At any rate we were the only section conscientious enough to stage a Saturday

afternoon rehearsal in preparation for the Sunday morning Exercise.

The enemy had been considerate in advising us of the time, route and direction of his proposed onslaught, and this tended to simplify our plans. We forgathered, therefore, on our weekly half-holiday to inspect the stretch of British countryside entrusted to us, to conduct a survey of strategic ditches and trees, and to seek permission from complete strangers to spend the following morning lurking in their front gardens. It was in the course of obtaining such permission that our Tactical Exercise was transmuted into a "Manoeuvre," thus lending us authority with the householders, though bringing an expression of frank apprehension to the faces of some of them. One elderly lady threw a wistful look at her diminutive lawn, sighed bravely, and said she supposed it was the war, like the rationing, and in granting us permission expressed the hope that the tanks would keep off the flower-beds if they possibly could. We said we would ask them to try.

As the afternoon wore on we began to be more and more confident of our wisdom in deciding on a rehearsal, and more and more scathing in our attitude towards the other sections, whose lethargy and lack of foresight promised to hamper them so disastrously at the actual performance.

One would have thought that the disposition of six men along a five-hundred-yard route rich in trees and undergrowth would have presented little difficulty, especially as a shallow ditch ran along one side of the road for the whole distance. But one would have been wrong. Mr. Benn, whose task it was to signal the approach of the enemy to the rest of us by prearranged wavings of his handkerchief, found it impossible to see without being seen—that first essential of a competent ambush. Little Mr. King, lying prone in the ditch, found that upon hurling a practice bomb hopefully in the direction of the road, it was thrown back smartly by the branch of a tree, alighting on his chest and destroying him utterly. Mr. Curtis the bank-manager, lodged in the fork of an elm tree across the way, dropped his whole haversackful of bombs on to the roof of our Section Leader's car, theoretically depriving us of our only means of organized withdrawal; and Mr. Corker, who is an A.A. patrolman in civil life

and who had been absently pointing out possible vantage-points with his official red flag, turned to find that he had arrested a short stream of traffic which was now demanding to know the reason why. Mr. Corker, whose volatility on all topics is growing to be a byword amongst us, took them all into his confidence at some length, and would no doubt have accepted suggestions from them all if our Section Leader had not seized the red flag and waved them on their way.

Co-ordinating his forces was a trying business for our Section Leader. Half a dozen men who have enthusiastically taken up concealed positions about a hundred yards apart do not tend to form an ideal audience for an address on tactics, and when he had got us all tucked away behind hedges and in ditches of his own choice he was apt to discover that he could not remember where he had put us.

"King!" he would call hoarsely, scanning the tree-tops—"where's King?"

"Here!" would yell little Mr. King, out of the pit which covered him.

"Where?" would bawl our Section Leader, crossing to the wrong side of the road.

"Here!" Mr. King would repeat shrilly, sitting up in his ditch and waving his cap—"What's the matter? Am I showing?"

And more than once Mr. Corker, eager to expound a brilliant theory which had just occurred to him, rushed out from behind a telegraph-pole and involved our Section Leader in a complicated tactical argument, dragging in a welter of reminiscent irrelevancies, waving his red flag excitedly and bolstering up his suggestions with his pet refrain of "If you see what I mean, I mean," and "What I mean, I mean to say." And, since whatever Mr. Corker means to say he invariably does say, these conferences went on until the remainder of the section, fearing that they had been forgotten, crawled from their hiding-places to see the cause of the delay, only to be sent back with a terse reminder not to leave their posts without orders. After the third of these garrulous intermissions Mr. Corker was despatched to a fir tree in the middle-distance to watch the efficiency of our signalling system.

This system was simplicity itself. Mr. Benn, on sighting the invading force, was to wave a handkerchief to

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"Urry up the Veal and 'Ams. There's a flock of Jerries overhead."

Mr. Tucker opposite. Mr. Tucker was to wave to Mr. King, Mr. King to Mr. Curtis, Mr. Curtis to me,* and so on all along the road. Each of us, on receiving the signal, was to take up his bombs, wait for the rush of wheels and then let loose his shower of destruction.

When all was at last arranged to his satisfaction our Section Leader retired to the cross-roads, from which point, impersonating the impersonators of the

enemy, he was to drive at high speed along the route. It was pure bad luck that just before he started Mr. Benn used his handkerchief to flick away a drowsy wasp which was interfering with his concentration, with the result that the perfect co-ordination of our communications caused a deadly hail of green and white paper bags to thud with splendid precision into the back of a passing lorry.

However, it was obvious that there were no faults to be found with the general scheme, and our Section Leader was so delighted with our work and

with his fortuitous escape from our bombardment that Mr. Benn and the wasp were exonerated from all blame, and even the fact that quantities of our ammunition had been carried off for ever failed to detract from his joy.

It was while we were all expressing satisfaction with our afternoon's work and confidence in a glorious victory on the morrow that somebody remembered that Mr. Corker had been up his fir tree for just over an hour. As we were all agreed that there was nothing more to be done, a messenger was sent to tell him that he could come down now.

* My account is not entrusted to Mr. Curtis's bank; my own bank-manager will scarcely speak to me, let alone wave to me from half-way up elm trees.



"I said the air-raid warning's sounded. Pass it on."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Domestic Habits of the Well-Connected

IT is just a little hard that aristocratic England, at this particular juncture of its not over-popular existence, should have to put up with such a travesty of its aims and behaviour as *Family Colouring* (JOSEPH, 8/6). True, the principal representative of aristocracy is an unbalanced peer with a lunatic sister shut up, like *Mr. Rochester's* conjugal encumbrance, with a bibulous custodian. *Lord Duneaton*, who has twice tacked his erratic way through the divorce courts, is potentially as mad as the *Hon. Nellie*, and matrimonial crotchetts come naturally to him. But there seems no reason why his next two partners (Nos. 3 and 4) should be equally prone to incidents of mirthless and pre-meditated adultery when, given birth, breeding, and an adequacy of this world's goods, there would seem to be more attractive methods of dispelling their highly contagious boredom. One is driven to suppose that, as in the case of the BRONTË *beau monde* whose "front families" these circles so oddly resemble, Miss MARY LUTYENS is less at home in the milieu she describes than in her average public's average notion of it. And perhaps, for a novelist, the imputation is not wholly unflattering.

House into Home

The reason why the title of his new book, *We Like the Country* (COLLINS, 7/6), is true for Mr. ANTHONY ARMSTRONG and his family is because, as he makes very clear in his last chapter, they believe that to live happily in the country one must belong to it and that to belong to it one must pay one's footing in practical personal service. That is the reason

why some people who are not often free to live in their village homes can still "belong," while other luckier people who stay there three parts of the year are never more than visitors. Readers of Mr. ARMSTRONG's earlier book, *Cottage Into House*, will snatch with both hands at this happy account of what it was like really to live at Margarets. Sometimes it is studded closely with pearls of wisdom—as for instance on the matter of growing lilies—and at others flashing with fun, as in the story of East Downing's unofficial mayor and the exhibition of gliding. Mr. BERTRAM PRANCE's illustrations are exactly right for a book which, for a great many of us, will be a description of our day-dreams, as well as the author's, coming true.

Delayed Action

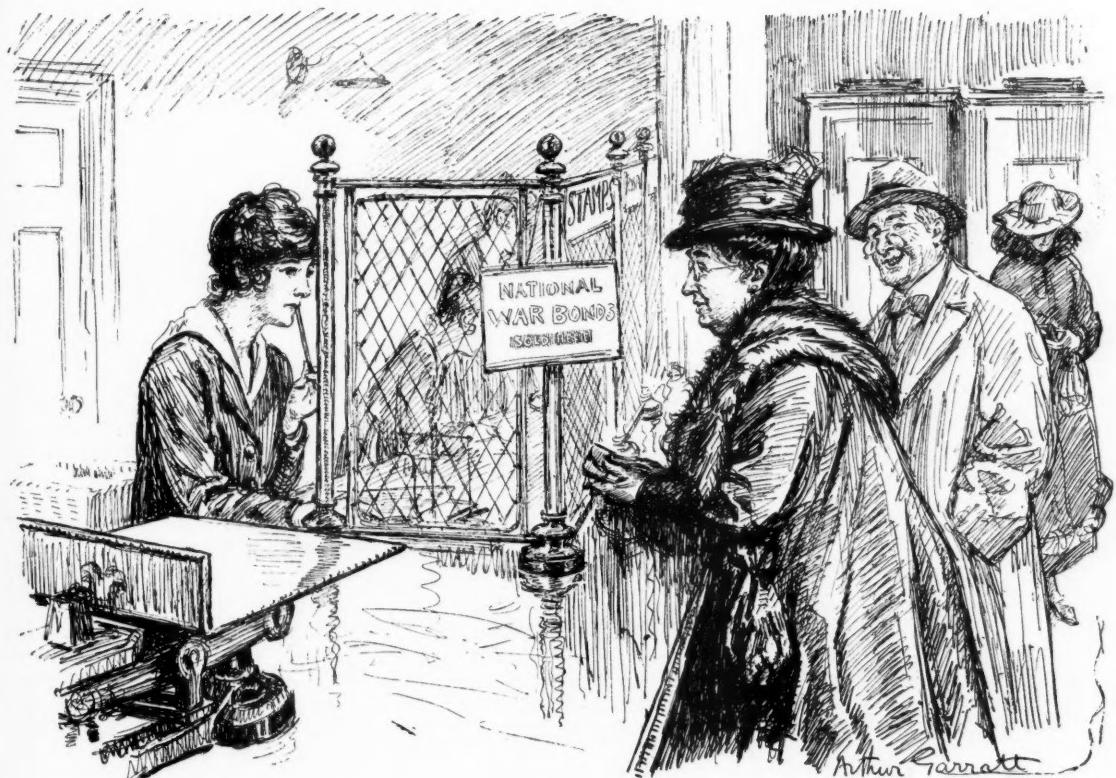
GEORGE A. BIRMINGHAM has found considerable difficulty in keeping pace with the times while writing *Miss Mailand's Spy* (METHUEN, 8/-). Beginning his story when the war appeared to casual observation rather a slow-going affair and the Ministry of Information a proper target for random bombardment, he has discovered before reaching the last pages—or possibly shortly after he thought he had finished them—that neither of these assumptions was any longer tenable. Accordingly he has added a kind of appendix in which all his people, previously pottering about in a distinctly futile way, suddenly become furiously energetic. Frankly, they needed stirring up, for anything more dead-and-alive can hardly be imagined than the spectacle of a tired lady novelist, a specialist in clinging love-scenes, being egged on by her publishers to produce still one more effort, and attempting in despair to turn a perfectly harmless foreign acquaintance into a German spy. It is arranged that the Ministry is to engineer a spy-scare to promote sales. Of course she does the only sensible thing—drops the book and marries the foreigner. If the main theme lacks inspiration the writer still has lots of quiet fun in reserve, and though one sighs in vain for a return, however irrelevant, of the *Reverend J. J. Meldon*, one may still find here plenty of ambushed amusement.

Back to New Barsetshire

Something, possibly the English love of the chase, makes people in this country follow serials eagerly and, if they enjoy a novel, look anxiously for a sequel. So far ANGELA THIRKELL has rewarded her followers royally. Her books are a complete series on life in New Barsetshire, and though new characters are introduced into each, she never forgets the old. *Cheerfulness Breaks In* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 7/6), however, is, not to put it gently, a disappointment. For once Mrs. THIRKELL's comedy plot—that legacy from JANE



"Haven't you got a nice kiss for the Commander?"



MORE WAR PRICES

"I WANT FIVE SHILLINGS' WORTH OF THREE-HALFPENNY STAMPS. THAT WILL BE SEVEN-AND-SIX, WON'T IT?"

Arthur Garratt, October 30th, 1918

AUSTEN and PEACOCK—disintegrates and ends in a confusion of mixed marriages, and the topicality of the book, which ends just after Dunkirk, jars a little. All the same there could not be a better picture of gentle country-dwellers in war-time, gallantly facing call-ups, black-outs, refugees, evacuees, rabbit-stews, spy rumours, Red Cross, A.R.P.s, charities, funds, sewing parties and petrol rationing; and the scene at the children's Christmas treat is equal to any of the now famous parties in earlier books—the ball in *Wild Strawberries*, or the *Earl of Pomfret's* dinner. *Lord Pomfret*, by the way, is killed off in this new novel, for which many of Mrs. THIRKELL's readers will hardly forgive her, though they will relish two or three of her new characters, and in particular the *Brownscus*, those appalling Mixo-Lydian refugees and their samples of peasant embroidery; and they will be lapped as they have often been before in the Lydian airs of Mrs. THIRKELL's agreeable snobbery, sharp humour and mild sentimentality.

More Jorkens

Lord DUNSANY's inveterate story-teller *Jorkens Has a Large Whiskey* (PUTNAM, 8/6), and sets himself once more to make the ears of the other members of the Billiards Club to tingle, and fortunately "I" am there to take it all down and share it with the rest of us. There are twenty-six stories of different lengths in the collection, some good enough, some very good and some superlative. Among the latter the one of the suburban satyr who lurked in an artist's garden, became his servant, and married a lady of title, is one of the best. The last, of the ivory poacher and his boat, runs it close. Indeed even the stories which most justify the other members of the Club in their sceptical attitude to the talented raconteur are so strange or amusing in their setting or have so odd a twist in their working out that they are fascinating reading. A *Jorkens* in every air-raid shelter would be a God-send: the next best thing is this volume.



"I don't THINK they came from the Heinkel, Constable—they're Neolithic arrow-heads."

My Motor-bike

I LOVE my motor-bike.

Why I want you to know all about my motor-bike is because sometimes when I am riding it I get a sudden crushing weight of loneliness at the thought that except for the long chain of dare-devils who have previously owned it so few out of the English-speaking people know anything at all about my motor-bike.

There are so many things I want to tell you about it that this is nearly as hard to start as my motor-bike, but I think you will get a good preliminary idea of the kind of character it has if I tell you about the big lump of metal which broke away from it soon after I bought it—a lump shaped very much like the Isle of Wight, though of course far smaller. It came adrift with a low rumble full of subterranean menace and kept pace with my motor-bike and me for some distance along the road until a last rusty swerve brought it up between the astonished feet of a milkman's nag.

You would have expected that so large a lump would have played some vital part in the life of my motor-bike,

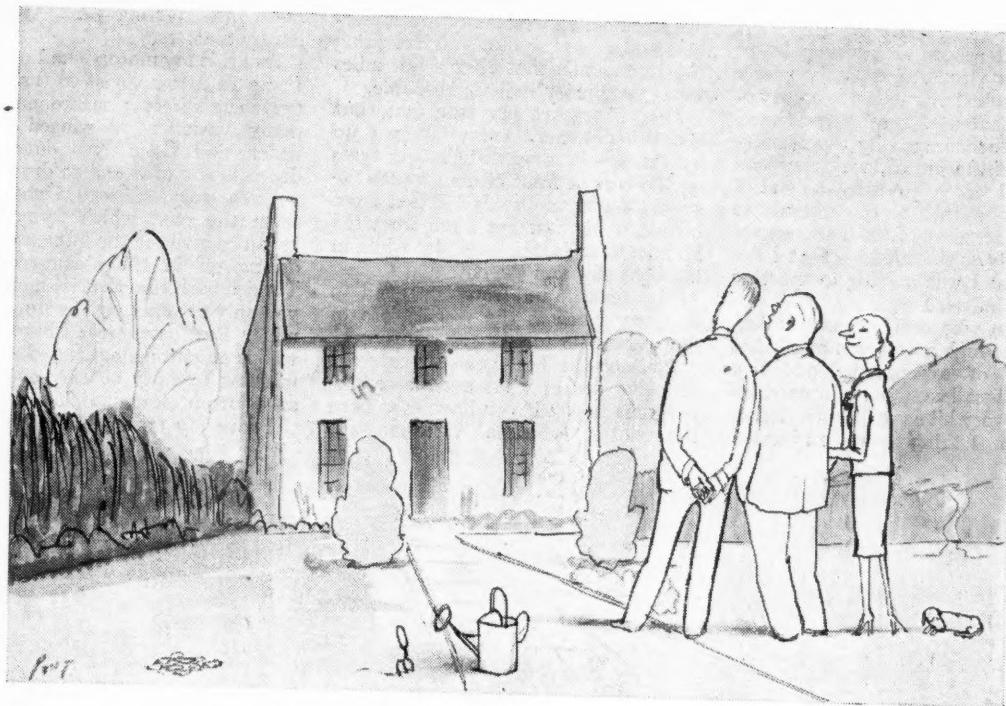
such as helping it to go or helping it to stop, but no amount of research even by men who had spent most of their lives fondling motor-bikes in the horizontal revealed either a yawning cavity or any portion of my motor-bike which could conceivably be the richer for the lump. We were driven to the conclusion it was simply a loose piece of ore of which the last owner had been trying to rid himself for years, but when challenged with having sold a motor-bike in ballast he replied that on the contrary such a hunk of crude metal was exactly what he had been looking for as a sort of sea-anchor for his goat. There our relations ended, on a note of mystery, and I only mention the matter at all, not because it could be of the slightest interest to anybody except the goat, but because it does give a little light on my motor-bike—which was more, as I found out too late, than its last owner had given me.

He was a big man who shaved on Sundays. It was Saturday, and after he had mumbled a few words into his bristle about the function of the many knobs, levers and keys which sprouted

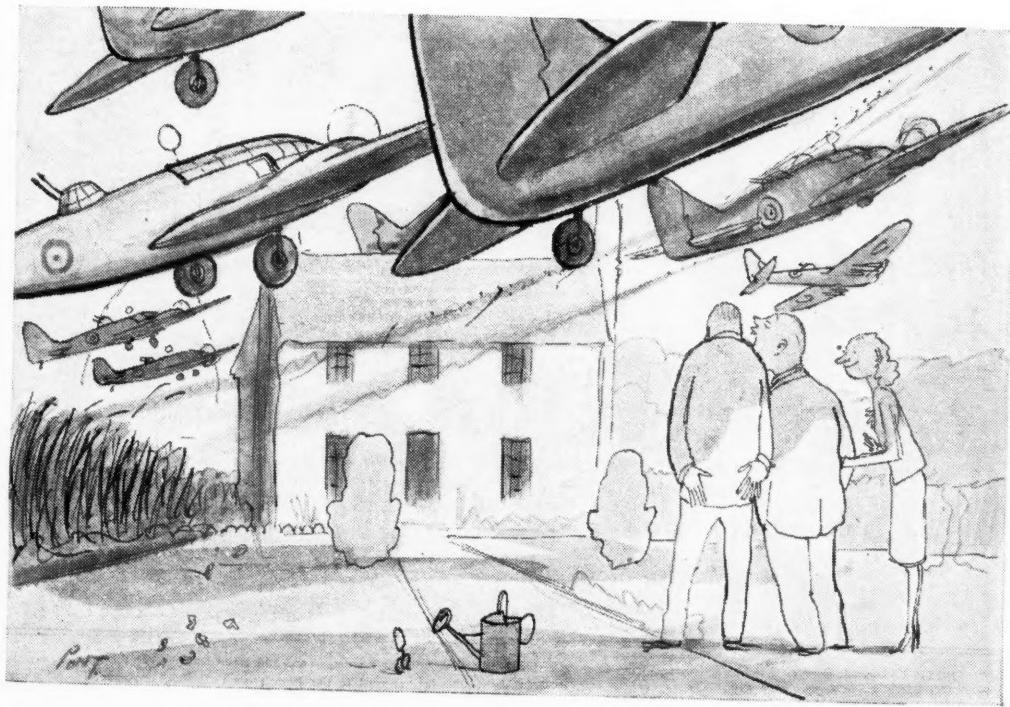
in all directions from my motor-bike—about as many, I should judge, as go to a good concert clarinet, and far more, as I saw from the outset, than I could ever understand—I begged him to husband his breath and set me in motion.

Some of the levers, I found, went away from me, some came towards me and others met me in a spirit of reason half-way. The knobs worked with a sad reluctance and many of the keys were hopelessly depressed, but by playing a chord here and a chord there I surged forward steadily enough. I soon found, however, that one of the many exciting things about my motor-bike was that whatever a lever might have done by itself the influence of the other levers changed its whole point of view, so that every movement was shrouded in uncertainty.

When I found, too, that no combination I could achieve had any but a stimulating effect on my motor-bike I was nearing a large main-road round-about. What made up my mind instantly was the thought that sooner or later each of the three roads on offer,



"Joan and I have only one regret about the new little home—



the aerodrome is just over the hedge."

all strange to me, must harbour a hair-pin bend. I can fairly say that that roundabout proved a turning-point in my life, for I rode round it for nearly four hours until my tank was empty of its horrid contents. During that time I was much encouraged by the friendly attitude of the crowd, which swelled hourly and which, towards the end of the afternoon, took on the appearance of a great congress of the Turf, wagering so freely on the outcome that I felt that at last I was moving in sporting circles, as indeed I was.

The man who designed my motor-bike had so high an opinion of oil that regardless of expense he added a number of small vents and sluices which keep me every bit as well-lubricated as the engine. I think he was an idealist

who wanted the rider to be one with his machine, and certainly my motor-bike and I have so much oil if nothing else in common that after a few miles we grow almost indistinguishable.

His oil reaches my face last, but the thick treacly spray thrown up by the special mud-distributing tyres on the cars in front of me prepare the ground for it admirably. When I get behind a big fast car I am from the Middle East in ten seconds, while in twenty I am from the bosom of Mother Africa herself and fully qualified to take my place in the frontispiece of any reputable missionary weekly.

Perhaps the best general picture I can give you of what my motor-bike means is to ask if you have ever been the victim when a vibro-massage

machine has taken the bit between its teeth in a riveting yard. Which bit hardly matters.

As I ride my motor-bike I often wish I was an entomologist so that I could get some direct pleasure out of the many varieties of winged creature which find themselves out of their depth in my eyes and so drown. I do not wear goggles, because when I tried them the mist which formed inside began to give me the impression I was dozing off in the steam-room of a Turkish bath, and that is an impression you only get once on a motor-bike like mine. But fortunately I have a friend who is an entomologist, and every few minutes I empty out my eyes for his sake into a clean match-box.

I love my motor-bike. ERIC.



"Soup, Sir? Thick or All-Clear?"

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